



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES
CULTURES, ART HISTORY
AND MUSIC

HISTORY OF ART



History of Art programmes

History of Art is about studying the ways in which art, in all its forms, is made and discussed. It is also about the ways in which artistic practices have been received and analysed over time, globally, from the earliest times to the contemporary.



What is History of Art?

Studying History of Art is not just about appreciating the 'great works'. It is also thinking about the different ways in which art has been made, written about, collected and displayed, and how this affects our understanding of it. You will study art in a global perspective, from the earliest times to the present. You will also investigate how art works are interpreted, and what this tells us about particular historical and cultural contexts. The professional worlds of art are also explored in this diverse programme, in areas such as curating, marketing and education.

THE BARBER INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS

History of Art students are based in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, located on the University of Birmingham campus. We use the collections regularly in our teaching and you will have the opportunity to write essays or a dissertation focusing on the works held here.

- Collection established in the 1930s by Lady Barber. She stipulated that purchases should be 'of that standard of quality as required by the National Gallery and the Wallace Collection'.
- Home to works by van Gogh, Monet, Rodin, Rembrandt, Rubens, Vigée-Lebrun, Botticelli and many more.
- Also houses a concert hall, lecture theatre, library, offices and teaching rooms.
- 'The Barber Institute of Fine Arts is a shining example of the high standard of art galleries to be found outside London... One of the world's truly great small art museums' - *The Telegraph*.
- The works that you see in this brochure can be found in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.
- Find out more at: www.barber.org.uk

Why study History of Art?

If you have a keen eye for detail and a passionate curiosity about the past, present, and future, this degree is for you. You will learn how to see the layers of meaning within a single image or object and understand why artists used particular methods to elicit reactions from their audiences. In an increasingly global visual culture, History of Art not only gives you a valuable insight into the past, but also provides you with the analytical skills to see the world around you in a new light.

A degree in History of Art allows you to develop many transferable skills:

- Strong communication skills – verbally and in writing
- An awareness and appreciation of other cultures
- The ability to identify and target key audiences
- Researching, then analysing and interpreting the information that you have gathered
- Handling complex ideas
- The ability to critically analyse sources and form concise and articulate arguments
- Managing your time effectively and prioritising your workload

Why study History of Art at Birmingham?

- History of Art at the University of Birmingham offers you an unrivalled opportunity to study the subject in close association with the outstanding art collections housed in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts and thousands of objects within the University's Research and Cultural Collections.
- We offer excellent teaching, driven by our research in art from Europe, America, and across the world. Current staff interests include: medieval art and visual culture; Renaissance architecture, painting and sculpture; 19th and 20th Century British, French, German and central European art and design; Global Art and Cultural Studies; museum and gallery studies; gender and sexuality in art; colonialism and post-colonialism; aesthetic theory and the philosophy of art.

- Teaching consists of a mix of lectures and seminar discussions which are supplemented by student presentations, study trips, personal supervisions and project work. The informal and supportive atmosphere of the Department encourages exchange, debate and student involvement.
- The Barber also houses a dedicated Fine Art Library, with magnificent floor-to-ceiling bookcases. This facility is supported by a Visual Resources Librarian who runs a searchable online catalogue of high-resolution digital images designed as a resource to support you in your learning and research.
- Upon graduation, you will be eligible to apply for one of the Barber Bursaries, offering six-months of funded training in curatorial, education and marketing aspects of gallery work.
- Study trips play an important part in your degree and you will visit galleries and museums in Birmingham, the West Midlands and beyond. In addition, all students participate in a week-long University-funded trip to a major European centre of artistic importance, such as Rome, Paris or Berlin, where you have the opportunity examine works of art and architecture in situ.
- You can apply to study abroad for a year in an approved university around the world. If you achieve a grade of 2.1 or above in your first year then you will be invited to apply for a Year Abroad in your second year. If your application is successful, you will go abroad in your third year and return to us for your final year. Find out more at: www.birmingham.ac.uk/yearabroad
- If you are studying Single Honours BA History of Art with us, you can also apply to spend a semester abroad at one of our carefully selected partner universities, where we have close personal ties with academic staff. If your application is successful, during your time abroad you will be able to study modules in History of Art and related subjects, including topics specific to the place of study. It is possible to attend universities where all the modules offered will be taught in English.

Our programmes

Your first year will introduce you to concepts, categories, and approaches to studying art and artists, as well as examining techniques and materials used in the production of artworks. You will also learn about key historical periods and styles, such as the Renaissance, Baroque, Romanticism, Realism, and Modernism. Lectures and seminars will be supported with study trips to galleries and current exhibitions in Birmingham, London and elsewhere.

During your second year you will acquire a greater depth of knowledge through optional modules that survey periods or movements in art history, such as: American Art in the 1960s; Impressionism and After; Art and Architecture in Fin de Siècle Vienna; Victorian Art and the British Empire; Post-War: Art In Britain after the Second World War; Renaissance Art in Italy and the Netherlands, 1400–1460. There are also modules where you can explore art history from a vocational perspective. For instance, you can curate your own virtual exhibition for our Inside the Gallery module, and produce your own video, podcast, or audioguide for our Engaging Art History module. You will also take a module on Research Techniques in the History of Art and participate in a study trip to a major European artistic cultural centre.

In your final year, you take a number of specialised optional modules that enable you to study a topic in depth, such as: The Pre-Raphaelites; Michelangelo; Contemporary Global Art; Paris Moderne, 1850–1930: Image, Concept, Femininity; Sculptural Experiments in Britain, 1837–1901: Women and Artistic Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period; Contemporary Art and Masculinity. In addition, you have the opportunity to develop your research skills in the dissertation which is taught by one-to-one tutorials with a specialist in the field. Your dissertation will be a 12,000-word study on an art object of your own choice.

Joint Honours

In addition to our Single Honours programme, there is also the opportunity to study History of Art as part of a Joint Honours programme with History, English, or up to two Modern Languages (French, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese). In your first year, study is split equally between the two disciplines. In subsequent years our Joint Honours programmes offer a flexible approach which allows you to tailor your course to suit your developing strengths and interests. In the second year you might stay with the equal weighting, or you might select to take more modules in one of your disciplines, effectively changing to a major/minor weighting. In the final year you have the option to maintain your second-year weighting, switch your major discipline to your other discipline or revert to an equal weighting between your two subjects. If you choose to take History of Art alongside one Modern Language, you have the opportunity to take a major/minor weighting from the first year. If two Modern Languages are taken alongside History of Art, your study is split between all three subjects equally for the duration of your programme.

Teaching and learning:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Individual and group presentations
- Independent study
- Barber Galleries
- Study Trips both in the UK and to a major European city of artistic importance

Extracurricular

Outside of your studies, there are many art history-related activities:

- The official department blog, *The Golovine* (www.thegolovine.wordpress.com) encourages History of Art students to contribute articles and reviews about exhibitions, study trips, work experience, and internships.



ART IN BIRMINGHAM

In addition to the varied programme of events at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham itself has an incredibly wide and eclectic range of art offerings. From stunning traditional works in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (which houses the largest collection of pre-Raphaelite artwork in the world), to edgy contemporary pieces in the Ikon Gallery and our thriving underground arts scene, there is always something going on in the UK's second largest city to accommodate all artistic interests.

Plus, the city is brimming with other cultural gems such as theatres, a packed festival calendar, museums, heritage sites and even the UK's oldest working cinema, The Electric.

- Barber Institute of Fine Arts volunteering.
- Our Guild of Students has over 250 societies, including student groups focused on art-appreciation and art-making.
- The city of Birmingham is home to many art venues and cultural festivals to visit, volunteer at or work with.
- The Birmingham Museums Trust frequently contacts the department to look for volunteers to get involved with their activities, such as their Conservation Club or to assist their curators.

Careers and employability

Our unique take on the study of History of Art is designed to provide both academic excellence and vocational development, a balance that is highly sought after by employers in today's intellectual and creative industries, as well as the wider workplace. Birmingham History of Art graduates have gone on to work at Kettles Yard in Cambridge, the Bodleian Library, Historic Royal Palaces, Cartier, The National Portrait Gallery, Christie's, National Museum of Wales, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Oxford University Press and Apollo Magazine. Examples of jobs they have taken up include archivist, curator, gallery coordinator, events officer, exhibitions assistant, learning and access officer, global development officer, programme coordinator and researcher.

There are many schemes available to help you get professional experience to set you apart in a competitive job market. Throughout your degree programme you will have the opportunity to gain valuable work experience, internships, placements and contacts in museums and galleries by volunteering for the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in areas such as Learning and Access, Press and Marketing, and Collections and Exhibitions. There are also opportunities in other important University collections like the Cadbury Research Library and the Lapworth Museum, as well as other organisations across the city, West Midlands and further afield. You can also benefit from our biennial Art History Careers Fair. This event sees some of our graduates return to campus to talk to current students about their careers, how to find opportunities and the wide variety of roles available to History of Art students. Recent speakers hold positions at the Wallace Collection, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Sotheby's Institute, Manchester's Craft and Design Centre and the White Cube Gallery. Students have the opportunity to network at the event and chat with the speakers to gain further personal insights.

Typical offer

Course	UCAS code	Typical offer
BA History of Art	V350	ABB
BA History and History of Art	VV13	ABB
BA Modern Languages and History of Art	5QV1	ABB
BA English and History of Art	QV3H	ABB

BA History of Art equips you not only for work in galleries and museums but also in other careers such as teaching, journalism, marketing, publishing, and research. It also provides invaluable training for all work involving attention to detail and structured thinking.

Our History of Art graduates have also forged careers in a variety of other areas, including the media, law, sales, education, local and central government, accounting, fashion and real estate. Examples of places they have worked include Cath Kidston, the University of Warwick and the British Horseracing Authority.



NEXT STEPS

How to apply

Apply through UCAS.

Offer-holder Visit Days

Following the application process, offer-holders will be invited to an Offer-holder Visit Day and are strongly encouraged to take this opportunity to visit the Department and meet staff and students with whom they would be studying.

LEARN MORE

Email: study-hoa-ug@contacts.bham.ac.uk

 [@artsatbham](https://www.instagram.com/artsatbham)

Official Blog:
www.thegolovine.wordpress.com

Full details on all courses with year by year breakdown can be found at www.birmingham.ac.uk/arhistory



This leaflet was written several months in advance of the start of the academic year. It is intended to provide prospective students with a general picture of the programmes and courses offered by the School. Please note that not all programmes or all courses are offered every year. Also, because our research is constantly exploring new areas and directions of study some courses may be discontinued and new ones offered in their place.

Please note the information in this brochure is correct at time of publication but may be subject to change (June 2019).



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